

THE BLUNDER OF THE BRITISH WEEKLY.

In an editorial, July 1, with the title, "Tartars and Lapps," The British Weekly, an English non-conformist journal, well known and esteemed in this country, made the following astounding assault upon the people of the South in the United States of America:

"Still, history tells us that it is the privileged and the powerful who are the most cruel. In the American Civil War the Southern women wore personal ornaments made of the bones of their unburied foes. They starved prisoners; they took scalps for trophies; when they reckoned on taking Washington they proposed to darken the air with gibbeted carcasses of dogs and catiffs. So it is always with the defenders of institutions that are safe only in law and forever in danger from justice. Selfishness, fear, cruelty follow in an inevitable order."

Could anything be more absolutely false? Could a paragraph be written that would be a more outrageous slander upon the Southern people? In the issue of August 12, the editor, who is Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll, states that he has a number of letters from eminent men in the Southern States of America protesting against these false and slanderous charges. From these letters the editor publishes one, from the Rev. R. W. Weaver, of the Baptist church, Nashville, Tenn., who says:

"At the beginning of the Civil War the white population of the States forming the Southern Confederacy was less than 5,500,000, while the white population of the Northern States was over 21,500,000. 'The privileged and the powerful' were in the North. The South was overwhelmed, the North putting into the field 2,200,000 soldiers, while the South, robbing the cradle and the grave, was able to muster only 1,000,000 men. The charge that the Confederacy starved prisoners is answered by the facts: In Northern prisons 12 per cent. of the Southern soldiers died from disease, wounds, and starvation; in Southern prisons, though Southern soldiers were starving in the trenches about Petersburg and Richmond, only 9 per cent. of Federal prisoners died from every cause. The statement regarding Southern women is a monstrous slander, and the writer must give his authority, or stand forth as an acknowledged traducer of women. In some way such a report must have gained circulation in England. It is most unfortunate that so many English are so full of misinformation regarding America. Let the writer of this calumny give his authority, and it will afford Southern men no little satisfaction to prove the utter falsity and virulence of the charge. The statement that Southern soldiers scalped their dead foes is too absurd to be credited for a moment by any one acquainted with the facts of American history."

In reply to the challenge for authority for these statements, Dr. Nicoll quotes from a paper written by James Russell Lowell, and published in 1865 in the North American Review, and republished in volumes in 1888 and in 1890. Upon this paper of Lowell, written in 1865, in the bitter passion of Boston at the close of the war, and upon this alone Dr. Nicoll bases his authority for his defamation of the Southern women, and his charges of starving prisoners and scalping wounded men on the field. He repeats the charges in his editorial of 1909, as if he had known nothing else of the American South, of the character of her people, and of their conduct through the war period, and the horror of reconstruction. He expresses surprise that we in the South have not known the paper of Mr. Lowell, which he supposes has not been confuted. The fact is that there was much of such literature emanating from notable men in the Northern cities in

the years immediately following the war. They were the productions of an angry and unworthy sectional passion. Dr. Phillip Brooks, as well as Mr. Lowell, said things false and bitter in the extreme, and a thousand pulpits were dishonored by such things. They confuted themselves. People of ordinary sense knew they were false when they were uttered.

It is to be regretted that Dr. Nicoll does not recall a word of the unjust charges against a whole people. We can have no controversy with Mr. Lowell of 1865. What shall we say of the British editor of 1909?

SOME RELIGIOUS STATISTICS.

Between 1890 and 1909.

The recent bulletin of the Census Bureau, giving the membership of the churches of the United States, is full of interest. It calls attention, very properly, to the fact that the comparison of Protestant and Romanist statistics is rendered difficult by the fact that in all Protestant bodies the membership is practically adult membership, whereas, in the Roman Catholic Church all baptized persons, including infants, are regarded as members, so that in comparison with the Catholic Church the strength of the Protestant bodies is considerably understated. Taken altogether, it is a fact that the figures given are hardly to be depended upon as absolutely accurate. Approximately, however, they may be looked upon as representing the general facts.

The Romanists report 12,079,142, an increase of 93.5 per cent since 1890, and the Protestant churches report 20,287,742, an increase of 44.8 per cent. The increase of Romanists is almost altogether due to immigration, fully eighty per cent of the foreigners coming to the United States being of that faith. The Protestants outnumber the Romanists in twenty-nine States, while the converse is true in sixteen States. The only Southern State in this latter list is Louisiana, with 61.3 per cent of the nominal membership.

Of the total population in 1906, 39.1 per cent are reported as members of the Church, as against 32.7 per cent in 1890. The increase from 1890 to 1906 was 60.4 per cent, which was considerably larger than the increase in the population of the country. Of the church members, 43.1 per cent were males and 56.9 per cent, females. The totals of Protestant membership do not include Jewish congregations and a number of smaller bodies, such as Greeks, Spiritualists, Mormons, Theosophists, etc., which number 1.7 per cent of the aggregate. Of the total membership, the Romanists embrace 36.7, and the Protestants 61.6, showing that despite the large accession to the Romanists' ranks by immigration, the Protestant forces of this country are nearly twice as strong.

In the period covered, from 1890 to 1906, the Baptist bodies increased 52.5 per cent, the Methodist 25.3, the Congregationalists 36.6, the Disciples 78.2, the Episcopal 66.7, the Lutheran 71.6, the Presbyterian 43.3, the Unitarian 4.1. The bulletin should have included the 449,514 members of the Reformed Churches with the Presbyterian bodies, where they properly belong. Had it done so the Presbyterian percentage of numbers and increase would have been very much